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USAID funded Career Days in Ampara and Batticaloa help youth find training and jobs

Colombo, January 22, 2009: The Accelerated Skills Acquisition Program (ASAP) is holding two Career Days for youth in Eastern Sri Lanka to strengthen links between local companies and training providers, as well as to help youth find jobs and training opportunities. The U.S. Government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), has provided more than \$2.4 million to support ASAP and help prepare school-leavers to better succeed in the workplace.

“USAID is pleased to support ASAP and the fine work they are doing to help prepare young people for jobs in their local communities,” stated Rebecca Cohn, USAID Mission Director. “By giving school-leavers practical job training and teaching career skills, they are better prepared to be hired and to succeed with that employer. This will help youth find jobs that will provide financial independence to help them improve their lives and strengthen their communities,” she continued.

The Career Days are designed to prepare students in each district to make future career decisions by being better informed about the employment, self-employment, and higher education opportunities available to them. Throughout the 28-month initiative, ASAP has sought to improve the workplace skills of school leavers aged 15-25 in the districts of Monaragala, Ampara, Batticaloa, Anuradhapura, and the Colombo suburbs. An innovative job training and employment program, ASAP also fosters links between training providers and the job market.

ASAP held its first Career Day in Monaragala on September 27, 2008 with the participation of many national and regional businesses, banks, insurance companies,

vocational training institutions and self employment promotional agencies. More than 1,000 youth attended the event. Companies collected CVs from the attendees, and some of the youth have already secured employment.

The Ampara and Batticaloa Career Days will be attended by many of the same national and district level corporate representatives, self employment promotional agencies, and NGOs. Participants will take part in career guidance sessions, mock interviews and self-employment advocacy from business, training, and industry representatives. All major training providers in the Ampara and Batticaloa Districts will disseminate information on educational opportunities available to youth during the events.

The Ampara event will be held on Tuesday, January 27 at the Daya Apparel Conference Hall in the Ampara town from 9.30 am to 4.30 pm. The Batticaloa event will be held on Thursday, January 29 at the Selvanayagam Memorial Hall at the Methodist Church premises in Koddamunnai, Batticaloa from 9.30 am to 4.30 pm.

Contact Mr. Bodhi Wanniarachchi, Program Manager – Business Linkage, of ASAP on 0773 652585 for further details.